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Autobiography  
of  
RICHARD JONES, JR.

I, Richard Jones, Jr., son of Richard Jones and Mary J. Cummings, was born 15th of October, 1856, at Provo, Utah. My parents then came to Heber, which was then called Provo Valley, with the very first company who came and brought their families with them with the intention of making homes and trying to raise grain and potatoes in this climate. This valley had been used as a summer range by the people of Provo City for some years, and there had been a little hay cut and a few head of cattle fed through the winter of 1858 said to be by Wm. Meeks, Wm. Cummings, and Robert Parter. Wm. M. Wall also had built a house and wintered some stock on the river below where Charleston was later built. But, in the spring of 1859, some 17 families came determined to establish homes where land and water were here ready to be used by those who had the courage to risk raising crops where the seasons were known to be very short and the snow in the winter fell usually from two to three feet deep and where they were practically shut in from December to April. This was the condition these brave men and women who settled here in early days had to contend with.

A survey of what was called the "big field" had been made and having brought their plows and farming implements with them they went to work on their claims, usually twenty (20) acres each. The land was not surveyed by the government until about 1875. They only had what was called "squatters rights" or claim to their land up to that time. In those days it was no disgrace to be poor because everybody was poor. Everybody used oxen for teams in those days for every purpose and though very slow and awkward to manage in many ways they were a very profitable team. We used to work them all day and then turn them out on the range to pick up their feed during the night. Then when they got too old for work we would turn them out on the hills in the springtime after they had

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been used to put in the crops and let them get fat. The poorer the oxen was when turned out the better and more tender the beef was in the fall. And the old ox when fat would buy another young ox again. One good thing in those days was the fact that there was plenty of good bunch grass all over the valley among the sage brush and splendid feed in the canyons on the hills.

As a boy I attended school when it was in session, but schools at that time were not held more than two quarters during the year, and lacked a great deal of being up-to-date as we now have them. Still, I got a fair start in reading, writing, and arithmetic, so that I could do my own business without any trouble later in life. When quite young I can remember working in the hay field with my father, bare-footed, and also during harvest time helping to rake the bundles of wheat and oats as my father and others cut them down with what we called a cradle. Later we got reapers drawn by horses to cut the grain which was quite an improvement, but for many years we still had to bind by hand. Hay also had to be cut with a scythe by hand which was very hard and very slow work.

The first suit of underwear I had was made by my mother out of common factory. I was then twelve years of age and was going out to Fort Bridger, Wyoming with a load of potatoes. I was driving one team and my father another. On our way back we stopped at the head of Echo Canyon and worked some time with our teams hauling ties for the Union Pacific Railroad that was being built. Men with teams got \$10 per day; wonderful wages in those days. When 8 or 9 years of age I used to go skating in the North Field bare-footed, and I was not the only one who indulged in this sport. About 1869, I went to work for Bishop Abram Hatch. He had horses and mules, and I learned to drive them and a great many other useful things while in his employ.

When about nineteen I was hired by a government surveying party. It was sometime in August, 1875, when four of us; Noah Mayo, David Murdock, Wm. G. Rasband and myself left Heber on horse back and

went out to join surveying parties. Noah Mayo and David Murdock returned home. There were three parties in the field running townships into forty acre lots. One part was on the west and north boundry line. They wanted me to go with them out of the field onto the southwestern boundry line, so the main man told them that they could have me if I wanted to go with them. The man I was with in the field wanted to keep me, but he said if I wanted to go on the boundry to go ahead, so with that understanding I went on the southwestern boundry. We went down onto Green River to what is called Holebrook, about six or seven miles below the mouth of the Duchesne. Will Rasband and I persuaded them to go back up Green River to the Uinta point of the line, and they spent one day moving packs up. We started from there and forked across the benches over into Antelope. We left our team and provisions at what was called the Old Point of Rocks. We left them there for the others to move into the Strawberry Valley, taking with us ten days rations. We worked on across and up Antelope to the head of Antelope, camping at the divide between the Minnie Maud and Antelope.

One night there came a terrible kind of moaning, groaning wind. I told them we had better go back and get more provisions for there was a big storm coming on. We talked it over and the boss said, "You're your own boss. You've got your own horse and saddle, so you can go back if you want to. I am going on. I have run lines over ten feet of snow in Minnesota." I said, "Well, I am not going back unless the outfit goes but I'll tell you one thing, you can't run lines in these mountains over ten feet of snow." We got across two or three big box canyons in the mountains and then camped in the south branch of Avintaquin. All I was doing was trailing along as a helper around the camp. The surveyers were out eight or ten miles in the hills. It snowed pretty hard that night. When we got up the next morning the boss put me on the stoutest horse we had. I started out to see if I could get to some high point and tell where we



were. I tried all day to get a glimpse of the country, but couldn't. The camp was supposed to move on up the right-hand fork of the Avintaquin. We were scattered in three parties, counting me as one. I stayed out as long as I dared before I finally started for camp. Just about dusk that evening I came upon the trail where the others had gone up the valley. The horses' tracks in the snow had filled in till they looked like dog tracks, but they got more clear as I got closer to them. Just at dark I met up with them. It snowed all that night. The next morning when we got up we tied our horses up. During the day some of the snow melted, but then during the night it froze, so when we got up that morning we had to heat green quaking asp sticks before we could get the saddles on the horses. We threw away all of our packs and everything that was heavy. We even threw our tents away, and just took what we could get along with. We had very little grub. We traveled for hours. About the middle of the day we got into a dispute about which way to go. They all decided against me and wanted to go one way, while I wanted to go the other. We went the way the majority wanted to go. We circled for hours. The first thing we knew we came onto our old tracks, so we knew we were lost. So then we went the way I wanted to go. We traveled on till night, and in the dim light we came onto our old camp of the night before. We kept traveling, but the snow got so deep that we had to break a road for our horses.

After traveling several days we ran out of grub. All we had left was about five pounds of salt. We came to the head of a little canyon; a kind of cut through the mountain. I told them we had to go down the swale and it would lead us down to the Strawberry Valley. We had a big mountain range to cross to get into the valley, and I had concluded by that time that we couldn't get there. Will Rasband agreed with me, and we finally got them started down a draw in the mountains. At night we had to tie our horses up, and all they had to eat was dry quaking asp bark. We built our beds on top of the snow. That swale led us down into a deep box canyon with precipices

on both sides. We came to a place where the snow was eight to ten feet high; so high that we couldn't get our horses over it, and we had to push them over the snow.

I don't know how many days we were without food, but before we got any food one fellow went kind of crazy. He got ahead of us on the trail and tried to stop us from going any further by threatening us with a knife. There was one six-shooter in the party. It belonged to the fellow's partner, Charlie Smith. I told him to let me have the gun, as it was impossible for us to pass the man with the knife without it. Finally he let me have the six-shooter. I went up to the man and made him get out of the road and keep far enough away so he couldn't knife us. We followed the canyon down till we came to a big cottonwood grove. We stopped there and shot a horse and cut his throat. We were too weak to skin him, but we rolled him over on his back and cut out the liver and heart and boiled them in the camp kettles for awhile. We had lots of wood for a big bonfire. After supper it was snowing and none of us could go to bed, so we went to work and skinned the horse and quartered him. We felt stronger and better from eating so we went on and cut the legs off and made soup from the bones. We were lucky to have a little salt to go in it. We sat around the fire all that night drinking soup. The next morning we moved on up a little wash and came to the Strawberry Valley. The reason we knew it was the Strawberry Valley was because we found some old sawdust around the edges in the drifts. There had been a sawmill up the river so we knew it must be sawdust that had washed down the river. We stayed there that day and got all the flesh off the horse, and strung it on ropes and dried it so that we could carry it easier. We were getting to where the snow wasn't nearly as deep. After another day we started down the Strawberry River. There were no trails so we rode along, sometimes on land and sometimes right in the river. In some places we had to wade for about a mile. When we

could travel out of the river our clothes would freeze stiff as ice. We followed the Strawberry River down till we got back onto the Duchesne to the Old Point of Rocks again. We left the trail and took a cut-off to Duchesne. We made camp on the Duchesne River and put the lightest man in the crowd on the strongest horse and sent him to the Uinta Agency at Whiterock to get supplies.

While he was gone we tried to catch crows by putting grains of corn that had been dropped on the old camp ground on some fish hooks that we had, but we couldn't catch any. There were a lot of work oxen, and I tried to persuade the boss to kill one of them, but he wouldn't. So I wanted to rope one, snug him to a tree and cut off his tail and make ox-tail soup, but they wouldn't go for that either. In a day or so, Bob Snyder came along from Ashley riding toward Heber. We saw him about a mile away and some of us got on horses and rode out to stop him. He came to camp on a horse, letting his team go on. He brought us four or five big loaves of bread and about a washdish of potatoes. We got a meal out of that. Then we went another day without food before provisions came. The next day our man came back. He brought two indians with plenty of provisions so we decided to lay over a day and recruit. We were still there when Captain Dodge and Major Critchlow came from towards Heber. They told us they couldn't have got through if it hadn't been for a big herd of cattle that had come through and broke the trail. They told us it was impossible for us to get back through. They persuaded us to turn around and go with them to the Uinta Agency at Whiterock, and from there we could go to Green River City and come in on the Union Pacific Railroad.

We stayed at Whiterock one day. The next day we went to Ashley with Capt. Dodge. He was the only white man living at Ashley. He had a log cabin and I stayed there that night. He asked me to stay there with him that winter, and I had decided to stay and the others were going to Green River City. While we were eating breakfast one morning before the others left, my father and Fred Rasband came



poking in through the door. They got us to go back with them. My father said I would seem like a dead man to my mother if I stayed out there all winter. There was one fellow by the name of Ropper in the party. He had an old horse and he begged us to let him come with us. So, the three of us from the surveying party, my father, and Fred Rasband started back. The cattle had beat a trail through the snow and that enabled us to go back through that trail. When we got to the top in Strawberry Valley there were several wagons. They all had two and three beds and wagon bows on, and they were all snowed under. The highest of the boxes stuck out of the snow five or six inches.

We got to what was called Soldiers Cabin in Strawberry Valley. At that time it had nearly been torn away and burned, but we had a little hay for our horses and we got under the roof of the cabin. It got so cold during the night that we got some tents out of our provision wagon and tore them up and put them on the horses. It got so cold we had to get up during the night and run the horses up and down the trail through the snow to keep them from freezing. They got so cold they put their heads out of the tent material and squealed like pigs. The next day we went on and got to the divide at the head of Daniels Creek. We measured the snow and there was twelve feet there. We camped there that night and went on the next day down Daniels Creek. We got to Heber after dark on December 6, 1875.

From my wages I had saved \$200.00. I bought my mother a stove with part of it. Soon after that I decided to get married to Agnes Campbell, a very fine young woman. We were married in the Endowment House on the 15th of May, 1876. President Daniel H. Wells performed the marriage. I had enough money to buy a bedstead, a table and six chairs. We did not go in debt for a piano or fancy bedroom suite at that time as many of our young people do now. However, we did get a stove and charged it. Our first home was on the corner of Third South and Main Street in Heber. Five of our children were born there. I worked at different jobs-

for several years. In 1889, we took a homestead in Center Creek, and spent several years grubbing sage brush by hand, breaking up the land, building a house, barns, sheds, fences, and making water ditches. It makes me feel tired yet just thinking of it. I don't know how I could have got all the sage brush grubbed and burned off if it hadn't been for old Uncle Rob Lindsay who helped me with most of it. I cut and hauled logs and timbers from Center Creek Canyon to Park City for several years to make money to buy clothing, groceries and other necessities until I could make the farm and animals furnish a living for our family which by this time numbered nine. I took up one of the best reservoir sites in Lake Creek Canyon that helped me very much and supplied enough water to irrigate my farm. I was one of the first stockholders in the Lake Creek Irrigation Company. I served as Wasatch County Commissioner for four years from 1899-1903.

In 1906, we moved back to Heber, and left the farm and sheep business to our sons. Over the years I had built up a very profitable sheep business. We wintered the sheep on the eastern desert in Duchesne County. Lambs were trailed from the summer range in Current Creek to Heber, and from Heber were loaded on cars and sent by rail to markets in Kansas City. It was on one of these trips that my son Edward got typhoid fever and died after returning home.

I served a two year term as city councilman in 1910, and was a member of the school board for several years. I worked for the State Land Board for quite some time. The office was in Salt Lake City, so I had to stay there several days a week as it was too far to drive.

One of my prized possessions over the years was a team of Welch ponies. They had been imported from Wales and were at the Utah State Fair. I gave \$600 and a team of mules for a mare called Flash and a stallion named Prince, along with their harness and a small buggy. Prince wore a plumb on his head and led all the parades here for years. To my knowledge, they were the first welch ponies in Utah.